Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development

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Minister of Public Works and Government
Services Canada

Message from the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians

With a young, fast-growing and increasingly better-educated population, a significant land and resource base, and a growing business sector, Aboriginal Canadians are well positioned to help build a vibrant Canadian economy.

The new *Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development* builds on a number of recent federal actions to improve the participation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the Canadian economy. These include an investment of $200 million through *Canada's Economic Action Plan* for Aboriginal skills and training to improve labour market outcomes for Aboriginal peoples, amendments to the *Indian Oil and Gas Act*, investments to benefit all Canadians living in the North, including Aboriginal Canadians, and a commitment to establish a new regional economic development agency for the North.

The approach that we are pursuing under the Framework recognizes that the federal government cannot act alone, that we have to focus on priorities, and that money is only part of the solution. The Framework will focus the federal government's actions on priority areas to unlock the full economic potential of Aboriginal Canadians, their communities, and their businesses by taking realistic steps to have a measurable impact on the lives of Aboriginal people.

Canadians, like others around the world, are grappling with the impact of a major global recession. Despite Canada's relative strength and stability, our country is not immune to the impact of the global recession. *Canada's Economic Action Plan* is designed to ensure a quick recovery and long-term economic growth at home. Through the implementation of the new *Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development*, the Government of Canada recognizes immediate requirements, while being mindful of the need to prepare for the opportunities of long-term economic growth.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I wish to thank everyone who participated in the engagement sessions in recent months and other meetings. I especially want to thank the members of the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board, and the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples whose 2007 Report, *Sharing Canada's Prosperity – a Hand Up, Not a Handout,* set the stage. These contributions help to ensure that this Framework will result in meaningful improvements to the lives of Aboriginal Canadians and their communities in all parts of the country.

The Honourable Chuck Strahl, P.C., M.P.

AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Over the past 20 years, there have been significant improvements in the economic outcomes of Aboriginal Canadians. Labour force participation, self-employment and earned income have all increased significantly.

The opportunities for Aboriginal economic development have never been greater. Private investment is increasing in every region of the country and there is a demonstrable interest on the part of the non-Aboriginal private sector to work with Aboriginal businesses and communities.

"The first priority is economic development. This is obviously the most essential step to improving the lives of Aboriginal people and their families."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, November 2007

The last policy framework for Aboriginal economic development was released in 1989 as the *Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy* (CAEDS). Since that time, the conditions, needs, opportunities and relationships associated with Aboriginal Canadians and economic development have changed significantly.

CAEDS was instrumental in establishing key programming elements for Aboriginal economic development, by supporting labour market development, business development and community economic development. However, it is time to introduce a new federal framework for Aboriginal economic development that is targeted at opportunities, is responsive to new and changing conditions, leverages partnerships and is focused on results.

ALIGNING WITH ADVANTAGE CANADA

In 2006, the Government of Canada released *Advantage Canada: Building a Strong Economy for Canadians*, a strategic, long-term economic plan designed to improve Canada's economic prosperity today and in the future. *Advantage Canada* is focused on helping people and business strive for excellence, and recognizes that the Government has an important role to play in creating the right conditions for Canadians – and Canadian businesses and organizations – to thrive.

Advantage Canada acknowledges that building new opportunities for Aboriginal Canadians to participate in the economy is the most effective way to bridge the socio-economic gap with other Canadians.

The new *Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development* will be consistent with *Advantage Canada* by:

- focusing government so that *roles and responsibilities are aligned* to maximize economic outcomes for Aboriginal Canadians;
- supporting *skills and training* that will create new opportunities and choices for Aboriginal peoples;
- *leveraging investment and promoting partnerships* with the private sector to produce sustainable growth for Aboriginal peoples; and
- acting to *free businesses to grow and succeed* by removing barriers to Aboriginal entrepreneurship and leveraging access to commercial capital.

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO ACT

There are emerging trends and significant evidence that suggest that Aboriginal Canadians are poised to take an unprecedented step toward becoming full participants in the Canadian economy, as entrepreneurs, employers and employees.

Over the entire 2001 to 2026 period, the cumulative effect on GDP of increased Aboriginal education and labour market outcomes is an estimated $401 billion.

Centre for the Study of Living Standards, May 2009

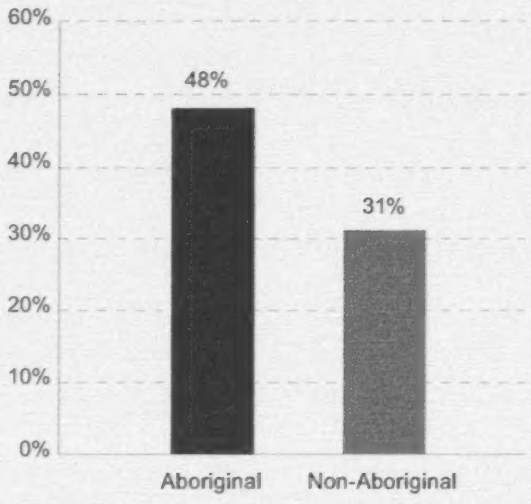
A Growing Population

The Aboriginal population is the fastest growing, and youngest segment of the Canadian population.

Between 2001 and 2006, the Aboriginal population grew four times faster than the non-Aboriginal population and, with a median age of 26.5 years, is 13 years younger, on average, than the rest of the Canadian population.

Over the next ten years, 400,000 Aboriginal Canadians will reach an age to enter the labour market, representing a significant opportunity to help meet Canada's long-term demand for workers.

SHARE OF POPULATION UNDER THE AGE OF 25



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006

There is a rising recognition among Canadian companies that employing Aboriginal people and partnering with Aboriginal communities is a smart business strategy.

TD Bank Financial Group, June 2009

A Growing Land Base

An already sizeable Aboriginal land base is growing significantly with the settlement of comprehensive and specific land claims. First Nations now own or control over 15 million hectares of land. Inuit own or control over 45 million hectares of land.

Over $315 billion in major resource developments have been identified in or near Aboriginal communities. In the North, the mining and oil and gas sectors have proposed developments in the range of $24 billion that will impact Aboriginal communities in the next decade.

This growing economic base, if activated, will make an important contribution to national and regional economies.

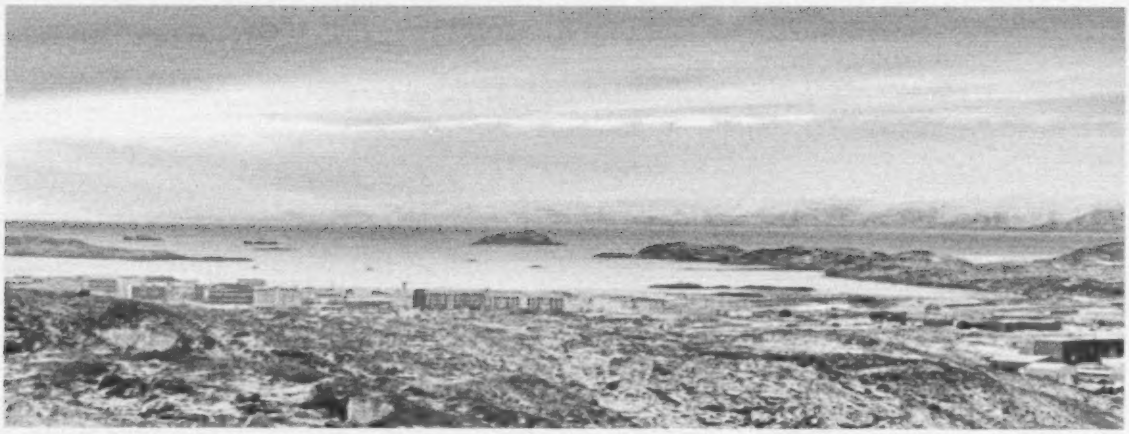
A Growing Interest from the Private Sector

The private sector is increasingly recognizing the tremendous economic potential of Aboriginal Canadians.

Many of the largest resource-development projects underway in this country – diamonds in the North, oil sands in the West and nickel in the East – feature partnerships with Aboriginal groups.

...forward-thinking companies who recognize that First Nation, Métis and Inuit partnerships make good business sense are taking the first steps by expanding engagement with these communities and spearheading cooperation.

Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, February 2009

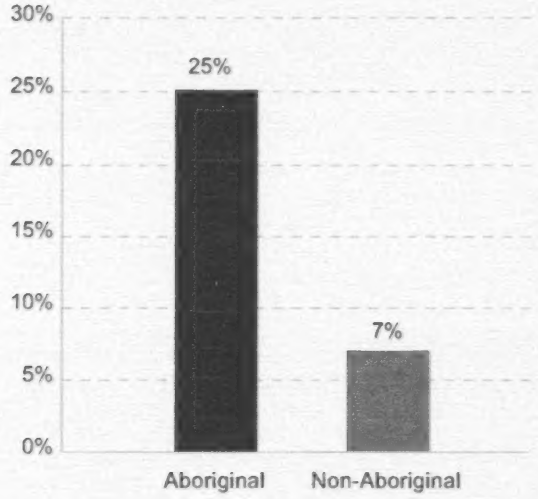


A Growing Entrepreneurial Leadership

New generations of Aboriginal leaders are business-oriented, and increasingly recognize economic development as a means to self-reliance and greater autonomy for their communities and their people.

Aboriginal businesses, both privately- and community-owned, are prominent in the renewable and non-renewable resource sectors. They are also becoming increasingly active across a number of industrial sectors, including air and ground transportation, the manufacturing and distribution of consumer goods, and financial services.

Growth of Self-Employed Workers From 2001 to 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001 and 2006

Our women act both as leaders and as agents of change in their communities: we believe that supporting their ability to assume this leadership role through economic measures is critically important.

Aboriginal Solutions Toward Stimulating Canada's Economy, Native Women's Association of Canada, January 2009

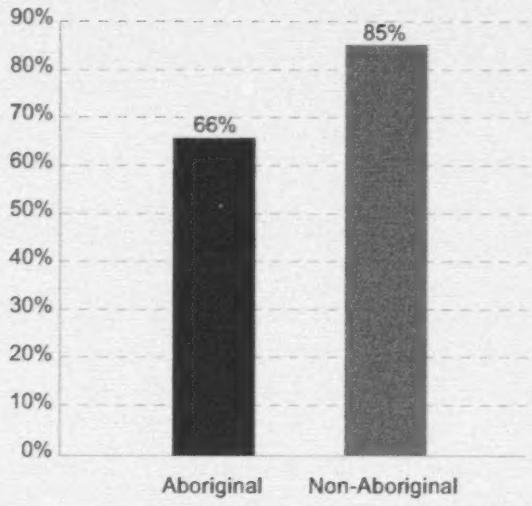
THE PARTICIPATION OF ABORIGINAL CANADIANS IN THE ECONOMY

Despite these emerging trends and new factors, the economic outcomes of Aboriginal Canadians continue to lag behind those of non-Aboriginal Canadians.

Aboriginal Canadians on average have higher unemployment rates and lower individual incomes. As a result, more than twice as many Aboriginal Canadians live in poverty as compared to non-Aboriginal Canadians.

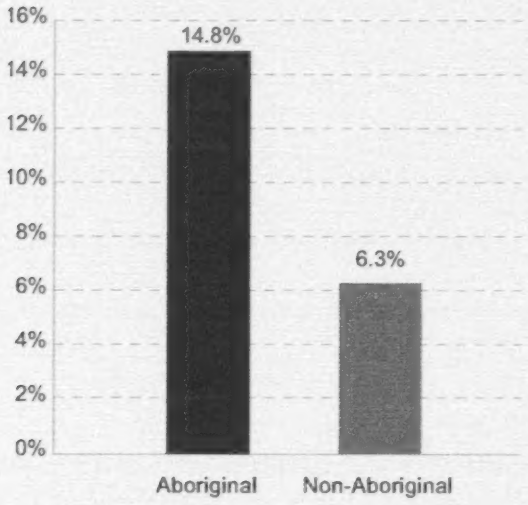
Outcomes also vary according to identity group, gender and location: Inuit face unique challenges living in remote areas of northern Canada; Aboriginal women have higher unemployment rates and lower incomes than their male counterparts; and outcomes for First Nations on reserve are typically lower than for those who do not live on a reserve.

SHARE OF POPULATION WITH A DEGREE, CERTIFICATE OR DIPLOMA



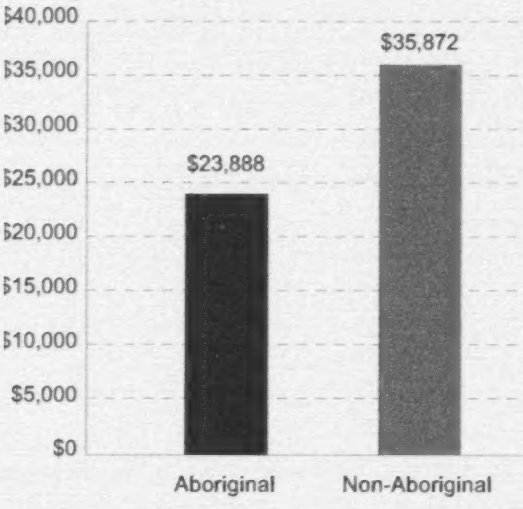
Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006

AVERAGE INCOME



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006

MOVING FORWARD WITH A NEW FEDERAL FRAMEWORK FOR ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The current approach to Aboriginal economic development has contributed to improved economic outcomes for Aboriginal Canadians. However, more significant gains can be achieved through a new whole-of-government approach that is responsive to new and changing economic conditions and emerging opportunities, and seeks to leverage partnerships to achieve sustainable economic development.

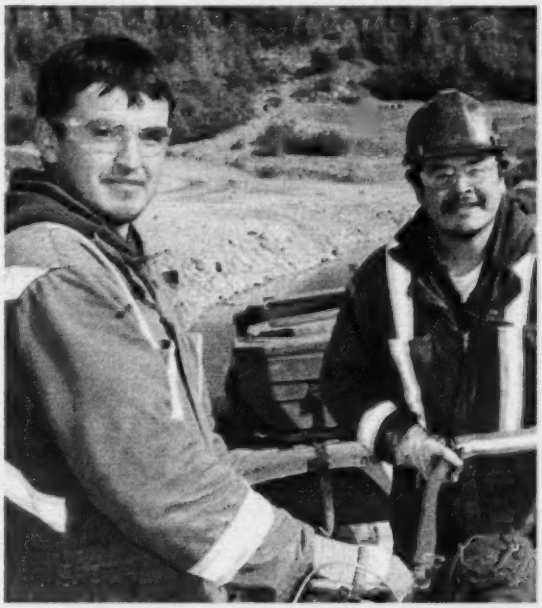
"The road forward out of dependency is already being paved. We believe in developing innovative solutions, instead of pouring money into futile programs that don't produce results."

Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-status Indians, June 2009

Today, a new framework must take into account the growing complexity of the increasingly globalized Canadian economy, the increasing diversification of financing and partnerships, and new and emerging economic opportunities for Aboriginal Canadians.

"When Métis people have access to economic development, it doesn't just benefit the Métis Nation, it benefits the entire Canadian economy."

Clément Chartier, President, Métis National Council, November 2008



ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: AN EMERGING CONSENSUS

In Budget 2008, the Government of Canada committed to the development of a new federal framework for Aboriginal economic development that would be opportunity-driven, results-focused and partnership-based.

A number of measures were used to support the development of the new Framework. The Government of Canada engaged with Aboriginal groups and other stakeholders from August 2008 to early 2009. To initiate this dialogue, a Discussion Guide, entitled *Toward a New Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development* was published and distributed.

"The single most important key to First Nation self-reliance is economic development."

Chief Clarence Louie, Osoyoos Indian Band and Chairperson, National Aboriginal Economic Development Board

A broad cross-section of stakeholders were invited to submit written views and to take part in national and regional engagement sessions convened across the country. Meetings were held in Halifax, Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto, Iqaluit and Montreal. Officials met over 40 national and regional Aboriginal organizations, provincial and territorial governments, as well as Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal private sector groups.

Added to this, an assessment and analysis was undertaken of research, studies and evaluations that have been conducted over the past ten years.

The National Aboriginal Economic Development Board, an arms-length, private-sector body representing the economic development interests of all Aboriginal people, provided advice and recommendations to the Government of Canada.

Through both the engagement process and analysis, a consensus emerged on the principal barriers to Aboriginal economic development:

The Legal and Regulatory Environment

- There is a pressing need to address barriers in the *Indian Act* and replace outdated regulations that impede economic development and investment, particularly on reserves.

Access to Lands and Resources

- The resolution of land claims and faster processes for additions to reserves are considered essential to economic progress.
- Government processes need to adapt to the speed of business.

Skilled Labour

- The job-readiness of residents of Aboriginal communities is a pressing issue, particularly the need for improved literacy and essential skills development and industry-specific job training responsive to the needs of the private sector.

Deficits in Infrastructure

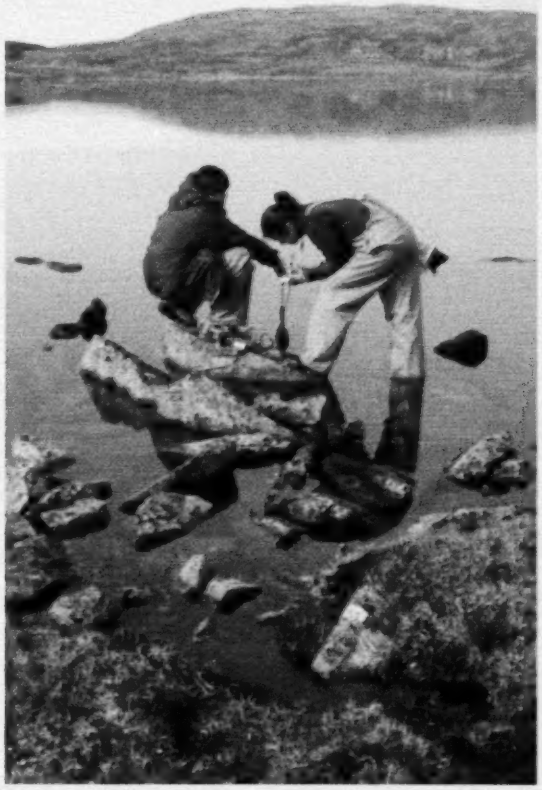
- Lack of infrastructure is often a significant barrier to economic development and investments, particularly on reserves, and in northern, remote communities.
- Improving communications and transportation is important to take advantage of economic development opportunities.

Limited Financing Options

- Limited access to commercial capital, particularly from financing and equity partnerships, inhibits the creation and growth of Aboriginal businesses.

Deficits in Capacity

- Aboriginal businesses, political leaders and institutions require the tools and capacity to identify and pursue economic opportunities.
- Improvements to community development programs and Aboriginal institutional arrangements are required, including support for long-term planning and ready access to expert advice.



WHERE WE ARE...	AND NEED TO GO...
• **Untargeted investments** are often distributed on grounds of equity rather than for real business opportunity.	• Economic opportunities for Aboriginal resources are systematically assessed, **targeted** and expanded.
• **Few links exist with the private sector** despite its growing interest in Aboriginal partnerships.	• The **private sector drives investment**, lending, joint ventures and major projects with Aboriginal Canadians.
• Aboriginal economic development is subject to **rules and impediments** not present elsewhere in the Canadian economy.	• Aboriginal communities operate in a **stable, efficient and predictable investment climate** that is attractive to business and investors.
• Capacity and accountability are inconsistent **across federal programs.**	• Federal **programs are disciplined and focused** on economic development levers.
• Federal **investments** in human capital development are **insufficiently linked**.	• All federal **investments** in human capital (education, social assistance and labour market development) are **connected** wherever possible.
• **Federal departments operate independently** and do not leverage related investments in Aboriginal economic development.	• **A whole-of-government** approach will align federal investments in Aboriginal economic development.
• The **federal role needs clarification** and does not build on potential for collaboration with other levels of government and potential partners.	• A **well-defined federal role** exists that reflects constitutional and fiduciary obligations founded on good public policy objectives and strong partnerships.

A NEW FEDERAL FRAMEWORK FOR ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

VISION

BY FOCUSING ON OPPORTUNITIES, RESPONDING TO NEW AND CHANGING CONDITIONS, LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS AND FOCUSING ON RESULTS, THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA, ABORIGINAL CANADIANS AND WILLING PARTNERS WILL WORK TOGETHER TO ENSURE THAT ABORIGINAL CANADIANS ENJOY THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT, INCOME AND WEALTH CREATION AS OTHER CANADIANS.

Aboriginal Canadians want real change that will make a lasting positive difference to their lives. The new *Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development* delivers on this shared objective by focusing federal efforts to address the unique circumstances of Aboriginal Canadians that limit their participation in the Canadian economy.

THE PURPOSE OF THE NEW FEDERAL FRAMEWORK IS THREE-FOLD:

- *A decision-making tool* – The Framework will guide the development of new programs and actions to ensure they are consistent with its strategic priorities and principles.
- *An assessment tool* – The Framework will be used to evaluate the relevance and success of federal actions, including those carried out in partnership with provinces, territories, the private sector, voluntary groups and Aboriginal people across Canada.
- *A communications tool* – The Framework will clearly identify the new federal approach to Aboriginal economic development.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

STRENGTHENING ABORIGINAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

A more business-friendly climate on reserve and in the North, and improved access to capital and other business opportunities will strengthen entrepreneurship.

DEVELOPING ABORIGINAL HUMAN CAPITAL

Supporting demand-driven labour market development will build human capital.

ENHANCING THE VALUE OF ABORIGINAL ASSETS

Aligning federal investments with viable economic opportunities, better management of business and community assets, and a modern lands/resource management regime will help enhance the value of assets.

FORGING NEW AND EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Promoting partnerships with provinces and territories and the private sector will ensure long-term, sustainable economic development.

FOCUSING THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

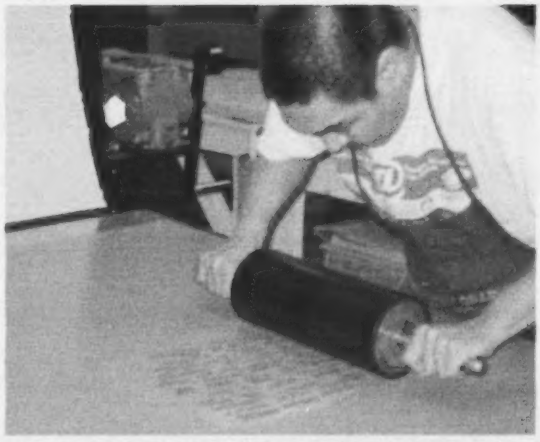
The role of the federal government will be more effective and efficient with clearer direction, greater coordination, more linkages and better collaboration.

STRENGTHENING ABORIGINAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Aboriginal businesses on reserve and in the North operate in a vastly different economic environment than those in the rest of Canada. Aboriginal businesses on- and off-reserve, and in the North, also face persistent barriers to accessing capital and have deficits in capacity.

The Government of Canada will:

- Remove legislative and regulatory barriers that deter business development
- Increase access to debt and equity capital
- Improve procurement opportunities
- Strengthen capacity of entrepreneurs to succeed in business
- Accommodate the real needs, conditions and opportunities facing different communities in all regions of the country



BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Métis entrepreneur Leslie Lounsbury founded SAY (Spirit of Aboriginal Youth) magazine with financial support through federal Aboriginal business development programming. SAY publishes six issues a year and distributes an average of 12,000 copies of each one. The success of the original magazine has inspired a series of additional publications, including an independent guide to Aboriginal post-secondary education. Recognized as the world's largest lifestyle magazine for Aboriginal peoples, SAY has earned several prestigious awards.

DEVELOPING ABORIGINAL HUMAN CAPITAL

With Aboriginal Canadians representing the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population, improving Aboriginal labour market outcomes is critical to Canada's long-term economic prosperity.

The Government of Canada will:

- Support labour market programming that increases skills development and employability to help Aboriginal people secure long-term jobs
- Foster linkages across initiatives supporting labour market participation, skills development, apprenticeship and training, as well as education and income assistance
- Collaborate with industry, educators and the voluntary sector to better match learning and training with job opportunities in the labour market

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

The Yukon Mine Training Association (YMTA) is a partnership between the Yukon's mining industry and First Nations. The YMTA works with its partners to maximize employment opportunities emerging from the growth of the mining sector in the North for First Nations and other Yukoners. The YMTA focuses on increasing the profile of employment and opportunities in the mining sector, assists in workforce growth and retention and facilitates the delivery of targeted skills and training programs in the mining industry. This includes safety training in accordance with industry standards. The Government of Canada invested $640,000 in these training programs in 2008-2009.

ENHANCING THE VALUE OF ABORIGINAL ASSETS

The substantial and growing land and natural resource base of Aboriginal Canadians will remain largely idle if the status quo is maintained. Laws and regulations, such as the *Indian Act* and the Northern regulatory regime, and deficits in community and institutional capacity are impediments to developing these assets.

The Government of Canada will:

- Modernize lands management regimes to enhance the value of assets
- Take a more systematic approach to identifying economic opportunities
- Strengthen capacity for community economic development planning
- Ensure that economic development programs are opportunity-driven and market-oriented

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Makivik Corporation represents the interests of the Inuit of Nunavik under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

As the main engine of Nunavik's economic development, Makivik negotiates agreements with private and public-sector partners. This includes ongoing negotiations with Hydro-Québec on existing and proposed James Bay hydroelectric projects, and the mining company Falconbridge Limited regarding the Raglan Nickel Mine project. Makivik is also responsible for investing and managing the funds obtained through these negotiations.

Makivik Corporation uses some of its capital to create subsidiary companies, both wholly owned and joint venture firms. Its companies provide employment to over 1,500 Canadians in several Canadian provinces and territories; it has employees working abroad in Greenland and the United Kingdom.

Air Inuit and First Air are its largest wholly owned companies. First Air is Canada's third largest scheduled airline providing passenger and cargo services to Canada's Arctic. First Air contributes $50 million annually to Canada's northern economy. Its routes cover more than 15,000 kilometres between the Yukon and southern Canada. First Air provides charter services worldwide. Each year, it carries over 225,000 passengers and 25 million kilograms of cargo, mail and foodmail. Annual revenues are approximately $260 million.

FORGING NEW AND EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Long-term, sustainable success is dependent on bringing the interests, resources, and accountability of all willing partners – including Aboriginal Canadians – to the table. Forging new and effective partnerships is necessary to ensure that actions pursued by the government and its partners lead to meaningful and permanent gains for Aboriginal Canadians.

The Government of Canada will:

- Bring together the experience and resources of willing partners – including Aboriginal Canadians, provinces and territories, and the private sector – to take advantage of economic opportunities
- Promote partnerships with the provinces and territories to advance Aboriginal economic development goals
- Support improved institutions and capacity in Aboriginal communities to contribute to the sustainability of Aboriginal economic development
- Facilitate linkages with the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal private sector

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

An innovative partnership will see Taku River Tlingit First Nation gain an equity stake in a run-of-river hydro project in northern British Columbia. Along with renewable energy, the project will also produce employment opportunities and reliable revenue streams. The project results from the $7 million First Nation Regeneration Fund, created by Tale'awtxw Aboriginal Capital Corporation, Tribal Resources Investment Corporation, Ecotrust Canada and the Government of Canada. The Fund helps Aboriginal businesses and communities in British Columbia participate in renewable energy projects by extending loans to acquire equity in run-of-river generation facilities. First Nations repay the loans with royalties and dividends they earn from the project. Designed and developed to meet the needs of First Nations in the region, the Fund demonstrates the valuable role that partnership can play in effective, sustainable economic development.

Funding from the Government of Canada was provided through the Major Resource and Energy Development (MRED) pilot project, which leverages financial participation from other levels of government, the private sector and Aboriginal partners. This increases the availability of equity funding to medium and large Aboriginal businesses in order for them to participate in major development projects and be active partners in joint ventures.

FOCUSING THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The Government of Canada will be most effective by focusing on the levers it controls: improving the coordination and collaboration among the federal departments and agencies that have an interest in Aboriginal economic development, implementing results-based performance measurement and ensuring ongoing engagement with Aboriginal groups and economic development stakeholders.

The Government of Canada will:

- Link federal program spending to real business opportunities
- Ensure clearer direction, greater coordination, better collaboration and increased linkages among federal initiatives across government departments and agencies
- Take a whole-of-government approach to Aboriginal economic development, recognizing that all federal initiatives need to be complementary and mutually reinforcing
- Strengthen the role of the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board
- Create a stronger interdepartmental governance structure to produce better results and increase accountability to all Canadians

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

A unique partnership with Affinity Credit Union in Saskatchewan provides debt financing to First Nation businesses with assets on a reserve. By working with financial institutions across the country, the Government of Canada is addressing some of the long-standing barriers to the growth and competitiveness of First Nation businesses.

Through the pilot Loan Loss Reserve Initiative, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) provided $1.9 million to establish a loan loss reserve fund with Affinity Credit Union. This fund works by offsetting a portion of the lender's potential losses on loans to First Nation businesses. This will make First Nation businesses more competitive by addressing certain historical impediments to debt financing, including provisions in the *Indian Act* that prohibit the use of reserve land as collateral.

Affinity Credit Union is the second largest credit union in Saskatchewan and is comprised of nine districts, including a First Nations District. It provides access to a complete range of financial products and services including every-day banking, insurance, mortgages, and wealth management products to 95,000 member-owners though a network of 46 branches in 37 communities across Saskatchewan. Each year, Affinity commits at least three percent of its annual pre-tax profits to community support.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A set of Guiding Principles will help shape federal actions in support of the five Strategic Priorities:

An appropriate role for the Government of Canada

- Canada can play an important role in setting the right conditions for better economic development outcomes, but does not have all levers, responsibility and resources
- Canada must work in partnership with Aboriginal Canadians, provinces, territories, and Corporate Canada to share responsibilities and build success

A flexible approach to Aboriginal economic development

- Federal actions must respond to the viable opportunities and the real conditions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis businesses and communities across Canada
- Canada must employ a whole of government approach to achieve the greatest benefit from federal intervention, including on a sectoral and regional basis and through both Aboriginal-specific and general application programming

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement, signed in 1984, continues to generate a wealth of economic and social benefits for Inuvialuit. The first land claim settlement in Canada's three northern territories, the Agreement mandated and directly led to the establishment of Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) as the parent corporation of the Inuvialuit Corporate Group, with a current net worth approaching $400 million. IRC, through its wholly owned subsidiary, Inuvialuit Development Corporation, holds business interests across several economic sectors, including oil and gas, transportation, property management and retail sales. In addition to contributing to annual distribution payments to all beneficiaries of the land claim agreement, these investments provide direct employment and training opportunities to Inuvialuit both within and outside the settlement region. With increased interest in Arctic deposits of oil and gas, particularly those in the Beaufort Sea area, IRC will play an important role in the ongoing efforts to identify and secure Canada's energy supplies, and assert sovereignty over its offshore natural resources. IRC, through its participation in the Aboriginal Pipeline Group, will also hold a significant equity position in the $16 billion-plus Mackenzie Gas Pipeline.

A focus on implementation

- Stronger governance structure will ensure coordination across government and among partners, and greater accountability to Canadians
- Canada must continue to engage with all players to ensure federal investments and actions keep up with a dynamic and changing environment

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Membertou builds prosperity through private-sector partnerships. Membertou First Nation took the bold and unusual step of establishing a corporate office in Halifax, far from the community's reserve lands in Cape Breton. The move has paid off handsomely, as a growing number of local businesses partner with the First Nation on a series of development projects.

Today, Membertou operates businesses and partners in a long list of sectors, including tourism, fisheries, oil and gas and aerospace. The Membertou Trade and Convention Centre hosts dozens of events each year, creating jobs and generating revenue for other ventures, such as training and education programs for First Nation members.

Membertou's model of economic development is based on traditional principles of conservation, sustainability and respect for natural resources, along with modern concepts of innovation and proactive education. Membertou became the world's first Aboriginal government to qualify ISO:9001, the international standard for quality management. The community's business model sparked a remarkable transformation. Membertou eliminated its deficit and improved the transparency and accountability of its governance structures. Membertou continues to establish new partnerships and plays a growing role in the overall economy.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Over the long term, by focusing on opportunities, responding to new and changing conditions, leveraging partnerships and focusing on results, the Government of Canada, Aboriginal Canadians and other partners will work together to ensure that Aboriginal Canadians enjoy the same opportunities for employment, income and wealth creation as other Canadians.

This will be achieved by focusing efforts on three outcomes:

Opportunity-ready Aboriginal communities that have stable, efficient and predictable investment climates attractive to business and investors

> The Government of Canada will work with Aboriginal Canadians and other partners, where appropriate to: remove legislative and regulatory barriers to economic development, provide Aboriginal Canadians with greater access to and control of lands, build greater capacity in economic development institutions and support commercial infrastructure.

Viable Aboriginal businesses that can compete in today's marketplace

> The Government of Canada will work with Aboriginal Canadians and other partners, where appropriate, to: improve access to capital, encourage increased Aboriginal participation in procurement activity and support greater access to business expertise and services.

A skilled Aboriginal workforce that is able to take advantage of employment opportunities across the economy

> The Government of Canada will work with Aboriginal Canadians and other partners, where appropriate, to support demand-driven labour market development initiatives.

The Government will develop performance measures, in collaboration with its partners, and report progress toward these outcomes.

The Next Steps

The new *Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development* is the first step in a fundamental change in how the Government of Canada supports Aboriginal economic development, and ensures that First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in Canada have every opportunity to share in Canada's economic opportunities and prosperity.

The Government of Canada will engage Aboriginal people, businesses and communities, and will build on existing arrangements, like the Métis Nation Protocol and the National Economic Development Committee for Inuit Nunaat, to move forward with the implementation of the Framework.

The Government of Canada will also reach out to provincial and territorial governments, recognizing that they can play important and complementary roles in pursuing and achieving common goals.

It is in the interest of all Canadians – both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – to ensure that First Nations, Inuit and Métis people are full participants in the economy and are able to make a meaningful contribution to strengthening Canada's economic performance.

The Government of Canada has taken decisive steps to modernize its relationship and strengthen partnerships with Aboriginal Canadians. Building on this new relationship, the *Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development* will invest in self-reliance by focusing on opportunities and removing obstacles to Aboriginal Canadians' full participation in the economy.

A NEW FEDERAL FRAMEWORK FOR ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT . . . AT A GLANCE

VISION

BY FOCUSING ON OPPORTUNITIES, RESPONDING TO NEW AND CHANGING CONDITIONS, LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS AND FOCUSING ON RESULTS, THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA, ABORIGINAL CANADIANS AND WILLING PARTNERS WILL WORK TOGETHER TO ENSURE THAT ABORIGINAL CANADIANS ENJOY THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT, INCOME AND WEALTH CREATION AS OTHER CANADIANS.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

STRENGTHENING ABORIGINAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

A more business-friendly climate on reserve and in the North, and improved access to capital and other business opportunities will strengthen entrepreneurship.

DEVELOPING ABORIGINAL HUMAN CAPITAL

Supporting demand-driven labour market development will build human capital.

ENHANCING THE VALUE OF ABORIGINAL ASSETS

Aligning federal investments with viable economic opportunities, better management of business and community assets, and a modern lands/resource management regime will help enhance the value of assets.

FORGING NEW AND EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Promoting partnerships with provinces and territories and the private sector will ensure long-term, sustainable economic development.

FOCUSING THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The role of the federal government will be more effective and efficient with clearer direction, greater coordination, more linkages and better collaboration.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

An appropriate role for the Government of Canada	A flexible approach to Aboriginal economic development	A focus on implementation

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Opportunity-ready Aboriginal communities	Viable Aboriginal businesses	A skilled Aboriginal workforce